§2.8 The outstanding features of gambling games are swiftness, excitement, and uncertainty. The aim is to outfox the gamers by as much distraction as possible. Intense mental concentration is the playing and the wins between games, when losers storm over their fortune, are very welcome. These wins are often prolonged when a winner fails to walk his bluff and even bets for or to the game, or when a winner has to give his opponent change for a bill. If a man loses and has no money to pay his bet, he may continue playing and win his opponent's bets. While men who gamble are often confused by the custom of a man temporarily leaving the game to rest, eat, or urinate. Nobody represents him as his most true, unless he clearly indicates that he is "through." He therefore plans continues to participate in the winnings or losses of his side and is obliged to put his dollars as involved to collect his winnings.

Confident players use affect a technique which they are losing, particularly if they are playing against a more optimal. Louis Vitus, for example, after withdrawing his hand from below the blades, provocatively stretched out his concert the bet, placing the other behind his back. As was obviously opponent, his opinion motivated his hidden hand. Triumphantly Louis displayed the ruble in the outstretched hand. Sometimes games become intense between two dominant personalities who enjoy experiences as capable players, as when Louis Vitus played against Vitali Long, each being opinion of one mind. Frequently both of them won equal will everyone on the other side lost the opposing opinion, and the game would continue until one opinion overthrew his wits against the other. The swiftness of the game facilitates cheating, and experienced gamers tended to work considerable trust during or one side accuse the other of unfair playing. In general, the Indians are very good losers and maintained close control in appearance in the form of nagging and scoffed derogatory remarks concerning the opponents. It is obvious that the game is not played for the financial stakes but rather for the excitement and pleasure which the gambling presents.

Life Cycle

Birth and Infancy

§2.9 Although in 1931 two women, Dorothy Myers, gave birth in a van in the hospital in Whitehorse, most women continue to bear children without medical assistance. Whenever possible an attempt is made to keep the expectant mother in a remote settlement where experienced female help will be available to assist in delivery and postnatal care. This assistance is not always possible, however, and sometimes (especially if birth is premature) an older woman is forced to deliver her own child or is assisted by her whole livelihood. [illegible] On one occasion of an Indian [illegible] prematurities. During the summer a Lower Post, a woman delivered a generally called upon when labor becomes severe. The intervals of labor pains may last from 10 to 20 hours, but more like a fourth pregnancy.

Delivery is with the parturient in a sitting position. The cord is cut with scissors, and mother and child are then washed with warm water. The baby, as legs and straight, is wrapped in blankets with the hands bound to its sides and placed in bed next to the mother. The afterbirth is buried by many in the bush as easy to bury in a tree. No special precautions are taken with premature babies.

Usually these things were exactly double in value to the Ingalik. Thus a cup of gun powder procured from the Tlingit for five beaver skins was sold by the Tahltan to the Ingalik for ten beaver skins, and other things in proportion. 437 431

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, PUBERTY, MARRIAGE AND DEATH

Pregnancy

It is believed plenty of exercise and light work is best for a pregnant woman. A woman should be energetic and busy during pregnancy, thus exercising her body and mind. She should not, however, do any hard lifting, nor should she engage in violent exercises nor in any kind of work or amusement in which she would have to twist her body in any unusual way. Engaging in any of these things might cause the child to become misplaced in her womb or possibly cause the string to become misplaced. A woman who was lazy during pregnancy, sat down a great deal, did little work and ate a great deal would have a hard birth, for the child would be too big. If a woman engages in light exercise nearly all day long everyday and eats moderately or sparingly she will have as a rule an easy birth. Her child will not be too large and it will be healthier or stronger. 943

Some pregnant women make a practice of rising early many mornings. In the early morning they take a long walk or walk around much and also take a bath. Some think that to do this will make the child to be born fair of complexion.

A pregnant woman should not see any dead animal or corpse. If she saw the dead bodies of people and animals her child would die or be stillborn.

She should not eat to excess, especially of fat meats. This would make her soft, fat and lazy. Some women do not eat the flesh of any very young animal during pregnancy and this restriction is sometimes also enjoined on the husband.

Child Birth

Small brush lodges were made for women about to be confined.* They were of no particular style and conformed in shape and structure to the ordinary brush 944 945

lodges. Some were excavated slightly so that the inside consisted of a shallow hole or depression a little lower than the base of the lodge walls. These lodges were carpeted with moss or dry grass. Near one end of the lodge a short pole was sunk solidly in the ground. This formed a vertical post to height about equal to a person sitting on the ground. The butt end of a lighter pole was sunk in the floor of the lodge a short distance from the post and the smaller end bent down and fastened to the latter at a point a little below the top of same. This pole formed a kind of quarter circle or half bow and was adjusted for length and height to suit the woman's convenience. Over this pole the woman leaned with her arms embracing it or holding it when giving birth, or at least when having birth pains. The woman was attended by one or more (generally several) female relatives or neighbors who had experience or who had given birth to children. The woman's husband and all men were excluded from presence at the confinement and they were not expected to give assistance of any kind. Only in cases of child birth when no women happened to be near, did the woman's husband attend to his wife. When giving birth was difficult or protracted the midwife (or attendant women) helped delivery by shoving and massaging downwards, etc., on the belly and sometimes also with her hand in dilating and assisting the passage of the child. Hot drinks were also given the woman. Midwives generally felt along the neck of the child being born to see the string did not entrude the neck and cause choking. Only in cases of very hard births was the assistance of men or doctors sought. These men were shamans or others who had knowledge of the mystery of birth. All of these had actually witnessed the birth of game, viz., had seen goats, caribou and other game animals giving birth to their young. They also in communion with their familiars had received knowledge about the mystery of birth or had been instructed by game workers regarding same. Some of these men had helped game to give birth and they were considered the most powerful of this class of men. Generally they had helped a female of some kind of game to give birth by striking or touching her with gun lever, a stick, switch, axe, etc. Some helped in other ways such as by painting her red. Thus each man differed somewhat in method and experience. No two were exactly alike in their knowledge and procedure. When a case was much protracted and had gone beyond the powers of the midwives one of these men was summoned. Before entering he went around the confinement lodge muttering,

them he touched the patient with a switch or painted her red, or did whatever he had been accustomed to do when helping caribou, goat or other game mothers to give birth. This helped the woman to give birth naturally or as easily as game. If one of these men had helped an animal to give birth and the young had been stillborn or had died shortly after birth, he never tried his powers on women nor attempted to help them, for if he did their children would also be stillborn or would die in the same way. §95 79

The navel string was tied with sinew thread and cut with any kind of sharp knife (scissors are often used nowdays). No medicine was given to hasten the coming of the afterbirth. The latter was taken to some secluded place near by and hung up in a tree. The length of the string connecting the afterbirth with the child was observed. If it was long it was said the child would live to a great age. If of moderate length the child would live to an average age and if short the child would die young. The midwife wiped the mouth, nose and eyes of the newly born infant and touched these features lightly with her fingers as if shaping them in a certain way. This was done so these features would grow right and afterwards be of good shape and proportion. The head was not touched nor shaped in any way at birth or later. Dressing of infants' heads was never practiced §96

§47 by the Tahltan and neighbouring tribes. They knew, however, that head deformation was practised by tribes on the coast living south of the Tlingit and Haida.

§53 §47 Also unintentional flattening of infants' heads was hardly possible as no boards or cradles were used like those of Indian tribes to the south, such as the Salish and others.

§53 §46 The newly-born infant was first wrapped up in fur to exclude the air and keep it warm. Some short time afterwards it was washed in warm water, then wrapped in a small rabbit skin blanket and placed in a bag or baby carrier of dressed skin. When it became a little stronger and conveyed the calls of nature dry soft moss was put between its legs to absorb all moisture and keep the baby clean. This moss was changed three or four times a day or oftener.

§54 The pad of moss was held in place by a soft breech clout of marmot or other skin in the hair. (see National Museum Specimen No. 46)

The most common kind of moss used was that called baby moss (Sphagnum). Women about to be confined often gathered and stored up a lot of this kind of moss beforehand. Failing this moss, two or three other kinds of soft moss were used. If no proper moss was obtainable, as happened in rare instances, dry soft rotten wood was used. After childbirth the mother was

of a black color, so her skin would be smooth and soft. Some rubbed the entire body including the privates. She blew water out of her mouth, catching it in her hands and rubbing it over her body. At the same time she prayed and said, "May I obtain good things as easily and quickly as I do this". She put smooth stones down the neck of her robe and when they dropped out she uttered the wish that she would always be delivered of child easily.

She caught some lice and put them on a chip of wood or bark which she set afloat on water. At the same time she said "May lice leave me, and may I have none in after years".

She carried a load of wood (or anything) and whilst carrying it, prayed, "May I be strong and able to carry heavy burdens".

She attached stones to the ends of her hair and prayed her hair would grow long.

She made quick movements with her body and arms, etc., and prayed, "May I be able to move thus quickly when I become old". When a girl lit the fire she did so as quickly as possible, meanwhile praying, "May I always be able to light fires quickly even when I am old". She walked fast and ran fast sometimes, praying, "May I thus be able to walk and run fast when I am old." She picked berries quickly, picked needles

841 nor touch any of their belongings, especially those things connected with hunting. She must not touch any game and must not eat fresh meat of any kind of large game. If she did so the game would become smart or wise and the hunters would be unable to get them. She must not eat any kind of meat from any part of a beef.

841 242 Some informants claim the restrictions on menstruating women as far as food was concerned were just the same as those enjoined on pubescent girls. They must not eat bear meat, nor fresh meat of caribou, moose, sheep, beaver, marmot etc., nor the heads of animals. They could eat feet of caribou and moose but not of bear. Women did not eat the intestines of bears. If they did, their children would be sickly and ugly. After the child-bearing period was over they might eat intestines and feet of bear and also heads of any kind of game, etc. Some claim women menstruating did not eat even the feet of caribou and moose if fresh. In fact they were supposed to eat no fresh meat of any kind nor fresh fish of any kind. They ate only well-dried meat and [774] dried fish. This was because the spirit, life, or soul of the animal was still in the meat when fresh and the fresher the meat the more of the spirit it contained.

841 Two or three women may occupy the same menstruation lodge, if convenient. When the woman returns home, medicine bags, guns, etc., and children are taken

6: Hoogmans E-5 (1963-1965)1964 NDIS Nelson NDIS
Upper Liard

LIFE CYCLE

FROM BIRTH THROUGH CHILDHOOD

UPPER LIARD KAIKA. A girl announced her initial pregnancy by telling her mother that she had missed one or more menstrual periods. The older woman explained that the girl would have a baby and both then preserved the secret from other people. Even a husband realized the fact only when his wife's condition became indisputably apparent and even then people avoided the subject in conversation. A gossip was reprimanded with the words, "People don't want to know." In spite of these attitudes men, including the prospective father, sometimes bet on the probable sex of an expected child.

Pregnancy frequently produced nausea and weakness, whose only known remedy was rest. An expectant mother also developed preferences for certain foods, like intestines and soft meat. Foods advised for pregnancy included ribs, kidneys, the meat around the backbone, moose head, marrow, fat, rabbit, spruce hen, porcupine (but not the intestines nor the head), and beaver (all parts except the feet). Enjoined were moose blood, stomach, porcupine intestines and feet, and beaver feet. The pregnant woman also avoided chewing on bones, and in order to develop a strong child her husband ate no kidney until the expected baby had made its appearance. An older woman advised the woman with child not to lift heavy weights and to care for herself. When the girl felt life stir in her womb she reported the fact to her mother who warned that from now on sexual relations must be discontinued. To reinforce the avoidance and for the baby's safety a woman advised her daughter not to sleep facing her husband and to use her own blankets. Informants failed to recognize the custom of wearing a special skin belt in pregnancy.

An infant entered the world sheltered by a simple windbreak, which had been erected for the event about 10 or 15 feet from the family dwelling. A girl's mother prepared the birth camp because of the danger associated with delivering in the family dwelling. The cure of magical danger associated with birth (comparable, as will be seen, to attitudes connected with menstruation) also required the new mother to use personal dishes and utensils and to eat food that had been specially prepared for her by mother or sisters. The same women assisted in delivery, supporting the parturient below the arms. A woman never supported herself on a pole but informants thought the custom may have occurred in the Fort Liard area. A male shaman performed rituals in the event of a difficult delivery but remained standing a distance from the birth camp and in direct line with the woman's head. From that position he handed over water for the parturient that contained his power. An old woman cut the umbilicus with a stone knife which, because of the use that it had been put to, henceforth remained dangerous for any other purpose. To leave less than half an inch of cord projecting from the infant's body might cause the latter's death. With the woman remaining only slightly elevated, the afterbirth was allowed to deliver itself. Then, wrapped in birch bark, the placenta was cached in a tree some distance from camp,

where no young man would be likely to encounter it. A visit soon might follow the birth of a child with a lavish feast.

People possessed a theory to explain the reproductive process. Conception, they thought, resulted from sexual intercourse, in the act of which the spermal fluid (*kbapi*) entered the woman's body to mix there with the fluids discharged during her orgasm. The mixture of these substances produced the baby whose soul was wind entered through menstruation.[1] Repeated copulation developed the embryo but great frequency might produce twins. Contraceptive techniques remained scarcely suited to attain their intended end. To prevent herself from conceiving a woman might draw back as far as to allow the semen that her partner was on the point of ejaculating. Coitus interruptus and continence were not practised with the end of reducing pregnancies. According to one informant, if a husband and wife abstained from sexual relations the marriage would very likely break up and the man take up with another woman. One ritual designed to forestall conception involved a woman's mother filling the expelled placenta of her daughter's last pregnancy with porcupine quills and then sealing it in a tree. To burn the clothing worn during delivery also helped to avoid future impregnation. A girl who suffered extremely during parturition would beg her mother to perform that rite in spite of the fact that magic of this kind sometimes led to injury or illness. Barrenness shamed a woman as well as her partner and the cause always resided in the woman. To cure the condition a shaman might give her a strip of fur representing his animal sponsor and this she wore as an outer belt. The husband of a barren woman also took a second wife without, however, quitting his barren spouse.

The Indians blamed falls and other mishaps for miscarriages but sorcery remained an always possible explanation for a spontaneous abortion that could not be linked with an accident. The aborted foetus, contained in a bulbous bag, was either cached in a tree or inhumed between two poles. According to an informant's suggestion, premature babies squeezed concealed souls imperfect for rebirth. Generally such infants died but without being neglected or killed. A stillbirth received the same treatment as an aborted foetus. Congenital deformations had their inception when the mother turned in her sleep; hence women in pregnancy were warned to sit up before turning over. As already indicated, frequent ejaculation between husband and wife in the early stage of pregnancy generated twins. A woman who persisted in an extramarital liaison during pregnancy might also come to deliver twins. Whatever their origin, twins symbolized good fortune. Male twins were destined to be good hunters. No case of triplets could be recalled.

The new parents did not resume sexual relations until about three months after delivery. Magically the avoidance protected a man from parturition danger with which his wife remained affected. During the length of the taboo the women ate apart and used special utensils. Her stay in the birth camp, however, did not last beyond five days. No purification rites attached to the new father, who ought to occupy himself

[1] See below, pp. 139, 141, 142.

weapons like a bow. Persistence in such behaviour, she learned, might affect a brother's future. Upon approaching puberty a boy began to seek a power dream with the active encouragement of his father. From now on he began to sleep in the men camp or participate in the company of older unmarried brothers. The latter probably reinforced the brother-sister avoidance and is also said to have safeguarded youths in the event of a surprise enemy raid.

Dene Bine Kwhe. To ease fear, safety, and perception or other evil foods in pregnancy persisted to facilitate delivery. Parturition took place in a birth camp, that consisted of a circular wall of willows surrounding a fireplace. Here older women brought food from the main camp and assisted in the process of delivery. Ordinary knife served for cutting the umbilicus. Later the stump of the cord was dried, wrapped in a piece of tanned skin and worn in the baby's hat, where it remained until the child began to walk. An infant would cry for a long time if the cord-stump became lost. Eventually the cord would be cached in a tree, where the skin wrapped afterbirth had already been deposited (although it was probably not necessary that the same tree be employed). Following delivery the woman remained isolated and avoided sex relations for about three months.

Twins represented good fortune and neither of such a pair was killed. The Indians preferred boy babies to girls because the former would become hunters. Apparently female infanticide was sometimes condoned.[1]

Breast feeding lasted until about the age of three. On journeys, when a child began to cry the whole group of women might halt while it nursed. In winter during outdoor feeding the hair to be inside for the nursing woman's comfort. No principles of weaning were specified and rebuttoning was denied.

Elder parents exercised discipline. Children beyond the age of five who misbehaved or refused to heed parents' warnings were struck with the hands alone. Cursing to a young child met no discouragement. Toys included the bone toy, bull-roarer, cervitide antler, bone to be pushed by a pole, and bullet moose hooves hung on a pole, which a child delighted in shaking. Dolls were not played with but string figures, a practice said to have been derived from the Tahu Indians, furnished children with a pleasant occupation.

ADOLESCENCE

Upper Liard Kwhe. Coinciding with the vision quest, which in a sense marked the completion of childhood, a boy received training in hardihood and endurance.[2] In autumn he stripped and plunged into icy water. When winter came, groups of naked boys rolled in soft snow, after which some older men whipped the youths with willows. A boy never cried out in pain during such a trial but he could protect his chest with crossed arms and might escape when he reached the limit of endurance. A mild com-

[1] Among the Tlingit, infant girls were sometimes strangled. Twins being regarded as an "evil omen" were also put to death. Jones, *Study of the Tlingets of Alaska* (1914), 125.

[2] Perhaps the exercises began earlier and finished at puberty, as among the Hareskin Loucheux and Ehrlichmen, *Children of the People* (1947), 86-87.